



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

Mountain
Plains
Region

1244 Speer Boulevard
Denver, CO 80204-3585

Reply to
Attn. of:

CACFP-607

MAR 23 2000

Subject:

Participation of Emergency Shelters in the Child and Adult Care
Food Program (CACFP)—Questions and Answers

To:

STATE AGENCY DIRECTORS -
(Child Nutrition Programs)

Colorado DPHE, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri DH,
Montana DPHSS, Nebraska ED, North Dakota,
South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming

Since July 1, 1999, CACFP benefits have been extended to include meal services to children who reside with their families in emergency shelters, under the provisions of section 17(t)(1) of the National School Lunch Act (NSLA). Questions have been raised about the approval of shelters and the meal services they provide to children in CACFP. Because the circumstances of an emergency shelter are so different from any other type of CACFP institution, we thought it would be helpful to share these questions, and our responses, with you.

In every response, we wanted to be certain that CACFP provides children in families experiencing homelessness the nutrition assistance they need. We also wanted to reduce the potential for abuse in CACFP. Participating shelters must be accountable and only claim reimbursement for eligible children. They must ensure that CACFP funds are used only for the conduct or improvement of the CACFP food service operation, principally for the benefit of participating children.

Finally, we recognize that homeless service agencies target and serve persons and families experiencing homelessness in different ways. We wanted to be flexible enough so that the program will not become so burdensome that it discourages emergency shelters from participating, or prevents eligible children from receiving the nutrition assistance they need through CACFP.

(1) Can shelters be independent institutions or must they participate through a sponsoring organization? An emergency shelter can participate as an independent institution, which takes an agreement directly with the State agency, or as a sponsoring organization of one or more shelter facilities.

CACFP State Directors

child meets CACFP meal pattern requirements. The shelter may have to supplement the donated meal with additional food items to ensure that the meal is eligible for reimbursement through CACFP.

To show that each meal served is eligible for reimbursement, we expect the shelter to maintain a daily roster of children receiving meals, and to record the menu and meal count for each meal service. At the Federal level, we do not require production records or weighted estimates of donated foods.

(17) Does the requirement to maintain a "nonprofit food service" (226.2) apply to emergency shelters? We recognize that shelters are often run by volunteers and operate on a "shoestring," and we therefore do not wish to create undue record keeping burdens. A simple record of revenues and expenditures for food service operations is all we are seeking. These records will serve to ensure that reimbursement is used only to support food service to eligible children.

SUMMARY

This memorandum and CACFP-572 dated April 1, 1999 have addressed a number of the issues that have been raised about the approval and participation of emergency shelters in CACFP. We want to emphasize that it is acceptable for States to set requirements that are different for emergency shelters than those for CACFP centers, as long as they are consistent with our guidance. In fact, we encourage State agencies to reduce any State requirements that impose additional burdens to emergency shelters.

If you have any questions, please contact us at (303) 844-0359.



STELLA NASH
Acting Regional Director
Child Nutrition Programs

